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California State Senate

**SENATOR
 BILL MORROW**

THIRTY-EIGHTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

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ENERGY, UTILITIES
 AND COMMUNICATIONS
 (VICE CHAIR)

GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

TRANSPORTATION

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SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE
 PRICE MANIPULATION OF THE
 WHOLESALE ENERGY MARKET

MOBILE AND MANUFACTURED HOMES

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY
 ADMISSIONS AND OUTREACH

URBAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUBCOMMITTEES:

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

February 28, 2003

The Honorable Gray Davis
 Governor
 State Capitol Building
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Davis:

We send to you this bipartisan letter from the San Diego County Legislative Delegation about a matter of deep concern to Californians. During this era of reduced revenues and tough decisions, we, like you, are faced with many competing priorities all worthy of funding support; however we all agree that preserving California's missions is an educational and historical priority vital to California's self-interest. California's missions rank among our nation's oldest and greatest historical treasures and hold a special place in California schools. The historical knowledge and cultural influence of Native Californians have made a lasting contribution to education; and mission restoration and repair will ensure that future generations also have the benefit of experiencing and appreciating these great symbols of the spirit of exploration and discovery in the American West and the diverse heritage of California.

To illustrate our point, please consider the example of one of San Diego County's two missions -- the Mission San Luis Rey, popularly referred to as the "King of the Missions". As you walk through the Sunken Gardens or along the arched colonnade, you step back through time to the everyday life of the founding padres and Native Americans. Thanks to the reconstruction, preservation and dedicated caretaking by the Franciscan Friars, the mission has earned its designation as a National Historic Landmark.

The mission museum and grounds are open seven days a week and serve as an educational resource for about 20,000 fourth grade students who annually study the mission as part of early California History. The Retreat and Conference Center has hosted a variety of groups associated with churches of all denominations, schools and businesses who want to meet in peaceful and thought-provoking surroundings. Following the teachings of St. Francis, the friars minister to people of all faiths, recently hosting an AIDS retreat and a retreat for single parents.

However, the care and maintenance of this 200 year-old facility require more funds than the friars are able to raise through their daily operations. Dramatic increases in the costs of workman's compensation, utilities, goods and services have dictated deferral of much needed maintenance. The mission is still on well water and cannot afford a connection to city water. This is a public health issue -- but also a safety concern as there is insufficient water pressure to fight a fire should one occur. Even if money becomes available to hook up to city water, then the all plumbing will have to be upgraded to accommodate the newly elevated water pressure. Furthermore, the electrical system is archaic and desperately needs upgrading for safety reasons, as well. The State has mandated seismic upgrades, but the mission cannot even afford the engineering estimates -- let alone contemplate the millions of dollars required for actual upgrading work.

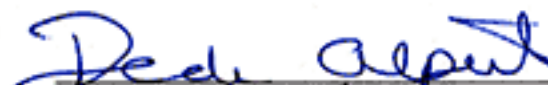
Trying to help themselves by developing more revenue and cash flow, the mission board of directors are undertaking the expansion of the oldest cemetery in North San Diego County and investigating the feasibility of building a retirement home and possibly a "mercado" similar to that in Old Town. But those projects are years in the future. The need is now and of near crisis proportions.

Last year the Legislature passed AB 716 (California Cultural and Historical Endowment Act), which you approved, but in doing so deleted the \$128 million authorization. The unintended consequence could result in dire straits, not only for the Mission San Luis Rey, but many other missions as well. The opportunity for you to remedy the situation is on the horizon. Last October, Congress introduced the "California Missions Preservation Act." That federal measure has broad bipartisan support and would provide \$2 million a year over five years to the California Missions Foundation to repair the missions and preserve their artifacts. Supporters hope the measure will pass early in this congressional session. However the bill calls for matching funds before the \$10 million can be granted. We propose that you use some of the Proposition 40 monies taken from the California Cultural and Historical Endowment to provide the matching \$10 million that Congress requires. Those funds are specifically earmarked for the "preservation of buildings, structure, sites, places or artifact...that preserve and demonstrate culturally significant aspects of California history." There can be no better description of the purpose and role of the California Missions.


Governor, as you continue addressing the needs of California in these difficult times, we ask that you consider the fate of our decaying California Missions. We can think of no worthier cause than helping restore and preserve one of California's most precious gifts to future Americans - our wonderful missions.

Respectfully,



Bill Morrow, Senator, 38th District


Dede Alpert, Senator, 39th District


Jim Battin, Senator, 37th District


Denise Moreno Ducheny, 40th District

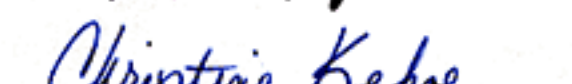

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